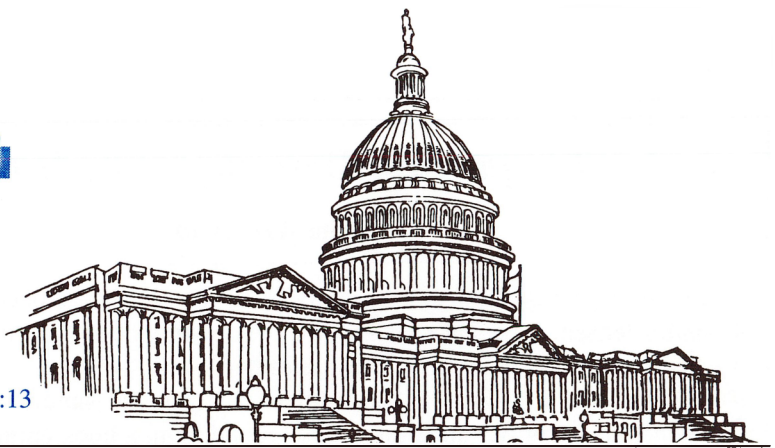


# SALT



*"You are the salt of the earth"* Matthew 5:13

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## CLC backs Hyde religion proposal

Two religious equality amendments recently were introduced in the House of Representatives, but the Christian Life Commission found only one totally acceptable.

The CLC has enthusiastically endorsed House Joint Resolution 121, which was introduced Nov. 15 by Rep. Henry Hyde, R.-Ill. The text of Hyde's proposal says:

*"Neither the United States nor any State shall deny benefits to or otherwise discriminate against any private person or group on account of religious expression, belief, or identity; nor shall*

*the prohibition on laws respecting an establishment of religion be construed to require such discrimination."*

The Commission has declined to support H.J. Res. 127, which was introduced Nov. 28 by Rep. Ernest Istook, R.-Okla. The text of Istook's amendment says:

*"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: Nothing in this Constitution shall prohibit acknowledgments of the religious heritage, beliefs, or traditions of the people, or prohibit student-sponsored*

*prayer in public schools. Neither the United States nor any State shall compose any official prayer or compel joining in prayer, or discriminate against religious expression or belief."*

Hyde, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, had hoped to hold a hearing on his proposal in December. It appears it may be February before such a hearing is held.

At its annual meeting in June, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution endorsing a constitutional amendment protecting prayer and other  
(See *Commission on Page 3*)

## Clinton may kill D/X abortion ban

It appears President Bill Clinton may stop a bill banning a gruesome, late-term abortion method from becoming law.

Shortly before Christmas, the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act (H.R. 1833) awaited final congressional action. Slightly different versions of the bill had passed both the Senate (54-44) and House of Representatives (288-139).

At *Salt* deadline, it had not been decided whether the House would vote on the Senate version or whether a conference committee of members from both chambers would work out a compromise.

When the measure is sent to the White House, the President is expected to veto it. In November, the White House announced Clinton's opposition to the bill. In a policy statement released through the Office of Management and Budget, the Clinton administration said:

(See *Health*' on Page 4)

## President endorses homosexual rights bill

President Bill Clinton became the first United States president to endorse a major homosexual rights bill when he expressed support for the Employment Non-discrimination Act (S. 932) in October.

The legislation would prohibit job discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation." The bill would add "sexual orientation" to the classifications—race, gender, religion, national origin, age and disability—protected in federal law from discrimination in the work place.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., is the chief sponsor of the bill, with Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont the lead Republican backer.

In an Oct. 19 letter to Kennedy endorsing the bill, the President expressed agreement with the bill's exemptions for religious organizations, the military and small businesses.

The Christian Life Commission has serious doubts the religious exemption would protect Southern Baptist Convention agencies, Christian schools, Christian book stores and some churches. Even if the exemption provided absolute protection to such entities, the CLC would oppose the bill.

The Baptist Joint Committee worked with homosexual rights organizations to include a religious exemption in the bill in 1994, a BJC staff member said earlier this year.

ENDA's chances of passage in this Congress are highly unlikely. A committee hearing on the legislation was held in 1994, but no vote was taken. Unlike last year, the Republicans control the Senate and House of Representatives, decreasing even further the bill's chances of approval.

## *Lethal Linguistics: Defining Away Humanity*

By Richard D. Land

Two items crossed my desk recently. The first, an article detailing the story of Sandra Jensen, a person with Down's syndrome who is fighting the decision to refuse her a heart transplant "because of her low IQ" (*People*, Oct. 16, pp. 67-68), illustrates how far we have departed from the sanctity of life ethic bequeathed to us by our ancestors. The second item, a book entitled *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives* by William Brennan, analyzes how linguistic warfare has been utilized, past and present, to prepare the way for horrendous atrocities against such designated human targets as African slaves, Native Americans, European Jews, unwanted or handicapped infants, and disabled patients.

Brennan's book reveals the childhood adage "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" to be a dangerous and lethal myth. Words can kill when they are used to dehumanize fellow human beings. The tragic story of Sandra Jensen, rejected for a heart-lung transplant because "Down's syndrome patients are not 'appropriate candidates,'" illustrates just how lethal such word games can quickly become.

Contemporary culture, as Brennan points out, is replete with examples of dehumanizing language. Carl Sagan referred to unborn children as "a kind of parasite on the walls of the uterus" that "destroys tissue" and "sucks blood from capillaries" (p. 110). Situation ethicist Joseph Fletcher described unborn children as "subhuman life in utero" (p. 78), unwanted pregnancy as "a venereal disease" (p. 123), a Down's syndrome person as "a sadly non- or un- or sub-human creature" (p. 80), and a disabled patient as an "incorrigible human vegetable" (p. 102).

From such horrendous words do human tragedies come. Sandra Jensen provides a human face for the vast tragedy which such language perpetrates on our fellow human beings. Born with Down's syndrome and a resultant IQ of 70, afflicted with heart and respiratory ailments, Sandra Jensen has labored heroically to overcome her handicaps. Since the age of 20, she has lived in her own apartment, supported herself as a cafeteria worker, and become an eloquent advocate for the handicapped and disabled. She has long faced the discrimination of the medical community. Her current heart condition results from the fact that doctors, though having diagnosed her heart ailment in infancy, declined to operate "because she was retarded" and doctors advised Sandra's parents "to institutionalize her, predicting she would never function on her own" (*People*, p. 68). Fortunately, her parents ignored the doctors' "advice."

Sandra graduated from high school and studied sign language at the collegiate level. Sandra says, "I've learned that being retarded just means being slow. Nobody really knows how far you can go." She understands what is happening to her. "I am being discriminated against because I have Down's syndrome.... I deserve to be treated like anyone else." Amen, Sandra.

## They said it

*"Disney says they are a 'family oriented company.' What kind of 'family' are we talking about? Should we next expect to hear from Disney that Mickey has left Minnie and moved in with Donald? Is that Disney's definition of 'family?'"* – **Christian Life Commission President Richard Land** on the decision by the Walt Disney Co. to provide health insurance for live-in partners of its homosexual employees, according to Baptist Press Nov. 1.

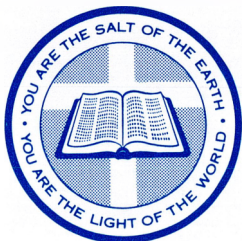
*"How can we charge that it is vile and repulsive for pro-lifers to brandish vile and repulsive images if the images are real? To insist that the truth is in poor taste is the very height of hypocrisy. Besides, if these images are often the facts of the matter, and if we then claim that it is offensive for pro-choice women to be confronted by them, then we are making the judgment that women are too inherently weak to face a truth about which they have to make a grave decision."* – **Feminist author Naomi Wolf** in the Oct. 16 issue of *The New Republic*.

*The money "is used for salaries and expense accounts for gay activists, to infiltrate the public schools to espouse promiscuity and homosexuality, to establish meeting places for . . . trysts, and to run a vast lobbying grid across the United States for gay militants. . . . We now have sexually active gay men with AIDS who do not use condoms themselves providing sex education for children with federal funds."* – **Claire Connelly, president of the Gay and Lesbian Resource Center of Ventura County in California**, on the use of funds of \$3 billion which she said at a congressional hearing "trickle down" to 8,000 homosexual organizations, according to *The Washington Times* Dec. 7.

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President: Richard D. Land. Editor: Tom Strode. Contributor: Michael Whitehead.



# Commission favors Hyde proposal

(Continued from Page 1)

forms of religious exercise by private individuals, including students, and prohibiting discrimination against such expression in public.

The CLC believes the Hyde proposal best accomplishes the goals of this resolution, while the Istook amendment violates the resolution.

Istook's proposal may open the floodgates to government funding of religion, including false religion, without any explicit limitation. The city of San Jose, Calif., recently used tax money to build a \$400,000 statue to an Aztec god. The CLC fears the Istook amendment would be used to defend the constitutionality of funding such a statue.

"Southern Baptists are more than a little squeamish about paying taxes to erect pagan idols," said Michael Whitehead, the CLC's former general counsel who recently accepted the post of vice president of business affairs at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Mr. Istook's amendment is a road paved with good intentions but which leads to government-funded idolatry. We cannot go down that road with him."

Not only does Hyde's language respect religious conscience while promoting government accommodation of religious expression by private people and groups, the CLC believes it also will enhance constitutional arguments in defense of official acknowledgments, such as the pledge of allegiance and the national motto. The CLC fears the Istook proposal's ban on government-composed prayer might be used to challenge such references to God in our symbols.

"The Hyde amendment is so simple even a lawyer can understand it," Whitehead said. "To support this amendment is to support equal treatment of religion by government. To oppose this amendment is, in effect, to support discrimination."

The Hyde proposal will not permit or mandate teacher-led prayer. It also will not require educational voucher programs.

"It will, however, permit such

## Express your opinion

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U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Capitol Switchboard  
(202) 224-3121

programs and will make clear that inclusion of religious private school students is not unconstitutional," Whitehead said. "Indeed, providing benefits to private school students but excluding religious school students would be illegal discrimination. Still, the wisdom of vouchers or any other government benefit program is a public policy matter that would be ultimately decided by local voters, and the wisdom of participation in such programs would ultimately be decided by religious patrons and religious schools."

Joining the CLC in endorsing Hyde's amendment are Focus on the Family, the Christian Legal Society, the Family Research Council, the National Association of Evangelicals and the Traditional Values Coalition.

Concerned Women for America, the Free Congress Foundation and Wallbuilders are among the organizations supporting Istook's proposal, according to a spokesperson for the congressman.

An amendment, not a statute, is needed to clarify a series of confusing court decisions in recent decades, the CLC contends.

"Church-state lawyers from America's largest pro-family organizations and the leading conservative church-state scholars in America have worked for over a year to

find the best language for a constitutional amendment and have formed a consensus behind H.J. Res. 121," Whitehead said. "We are convinced that the Hyde amendment is the best approach.

"We deeply appreciate Mr. Istook's work and commitment to the principle of religious freedom, but we are disappointed by his failure to support H.J. Res. 121. Perhaps when H.J. Res. 121 is supported by the House Judiciary Committee, all pro-family groups will rally their support behind this measure."

The Baptist Joint Committee and Americans United for Separation of Church and State are among the organizations opposing both amendments.

Opponents will cry, "like Chicken Little, that the constitutional sky is falling," Whitehead said. "Most Americans will not fall for this false alarm, especially after they look at the text. They will tell Chicken Little to calm down and look at what really hit her."

The introduction of Hyde's amendment followed about 12 months of discussion on the issue after the Republicans took control of Congress in the 1994 elections and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, R.-Ga., promised a vote on such an amendment by July 4.

Religious liberty organizations, including the CLC, and members of Congress struggled to find agreeable language. They also debated whether an amendment was needed or a statute was satisfactory.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said in late October he still did not know if he supported an amendment.

The preamble of Hyde's amendment is: "Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States in order to secure the unalienable right of the people to acknowledge, worship, and serve their Creator, according to the dictates of conscience."

In order for an amendment to become part of the Constitution, two-thirds of each house of Congress must vote for it. The amendment then has seven years in which to be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

# 'Health' clause would gut ban on D/X method

(Continued from Page 1)

"The President believes that the decision to have an abortion should be between a woman, her conscience, her doctor, and her God. . . . The President has long opposed late-term abortions except where they are necessary to protect the life of the mother or where there is a threat to her health, consistent with the law. . . . Therefore, the Administration cannot support H.R. 1833 because it fails to provide for consideration of the need to preserve the life and health of the mother, consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*."

Including an exception for the "health" of the mother would render the ban meaningless. The Supreme Court's definition of health in *Doe v. Bolton*, the 1973 companion case to *Roe v. Wade*, includes "all factors— physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient," thereby permitting abortion for a wide variety of reasons throughout pregnancy.

The Senate version of H.R. 1833

## Join CLC on-line

Subscribers to SBCNet, the Southern Baptist Convention's data communications network, may receive information on ethics and religious liberty issues from the Christian Life Commission and also "talk" with CLC staff members.

The CLC posts various items in the General Ministry B Forum of SBCNet, which is found on CompuServe, the computer on-line service. These include alerts about pending federal legislation, statements from news conferences and commentaries. In addition to accessing such items in the CLC library of the B Forum, subscribers may communicate with staff in the B Forum message section.

Free SBCNet membership kits are distributed by the Baptist Sunday School Board. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows and may be ordered at 1-800-325-7749.

provides an exception in case of a threat to the mother's life if no other medical procedure would suffice. The House-approved version allows as an acceptable defense for the doctor the necessity of saving the mother's life.

The House and Senate votes marked

the first time Congress has outlawed an abortion procedure since the *Roe* and *Doe* rulings legalized, in effect, abortion on demand.

The procedure, named partial-birth by the bill's sponsors but commonly known as dilation and extraction (D and X), occurs in the second half of pregnancy. With ultrasound for guidance, an abortion doctor uses forceps and his hands to deliver an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor pierces the base of the baby's skull with surgical scissors. The doctor inserts a catheter into the opening and suction out the brain. The collapse of the skull enables easier removal of the dead child. This method apparently is used by a limited number of doctors in the country.

Punishment of up to two years in prison and fines could be levied on any doctor found guilty under the legislation.

Opponents of the bill have charged the procedure is used only in cases of severely defective children or a threat to the mother's life.

Martin Haskell, one of the leading practitioners of the procedure, has said, however, about 80 percent of his D and X abortions are "purely elective," according to a 1993 interview with *American Medical News*, a journal of the American Medical Association.

Southern Baptists are exhorted to call or write the President requesting he sign H.R. 1833 into law.

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